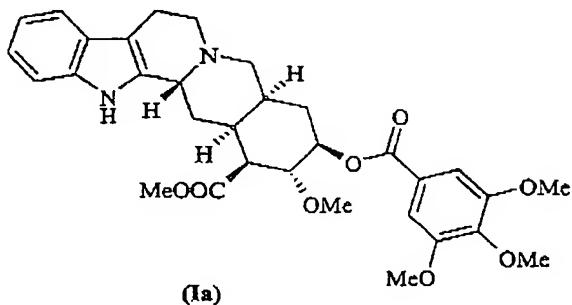
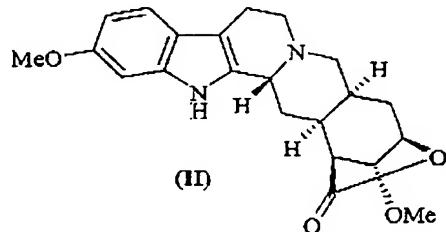


CLAIMS1. A process for the preparation of deserpidine (**Ia**)

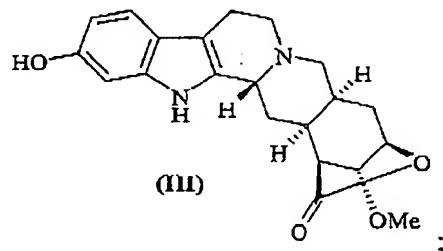
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comprising the following steps:

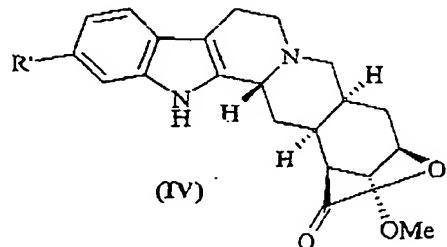
a) demethylation of reserpic acid lactone (**II**)



10

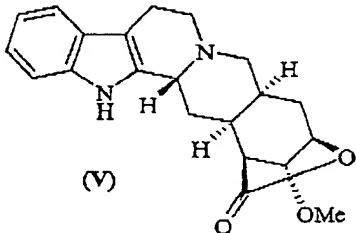
to give 11-O-demethyl reserpic acid lactone (**III**)

b) transforming compound (**III**) into a compound of formula (**IV**)

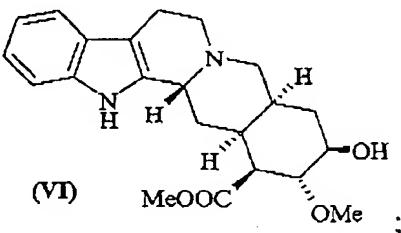


15

in which R' is a leaving group
and reducing compound (IV) to deserpodic acid lactone (V)



5 c) hydrolysis of deserpodic acid lactone (V) to methyl deserpidate (VI)



d) esterification of methyl deserpidate (VI) with 3,4,5-trimethoxybenzoic acid to give deserpidine (Ia).

10 2. The process as claimed in claim 1 in which in compound (IV) the R' group is selected from a sulfonate, an isoureido or a (5-phenyl-tetrazolyl)oxy group.

3. The process as claimed in claim 2 in which the R' group is *p*-toluenesulfonate or methanesulfonate.

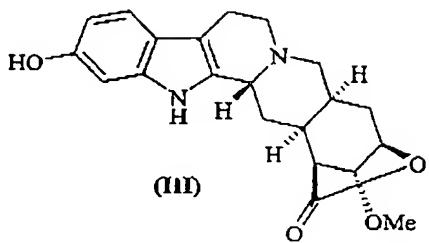
15 4. The process as claimed in claim 3 in which the R' group is *p*-toluenesulfonate.

5. The process as claimed in claim 4 in which the reduction of compound (IV) is carried out with nickel Raney.

6. The process as claimed in claim 2 in which the R' group is an isoureido group.

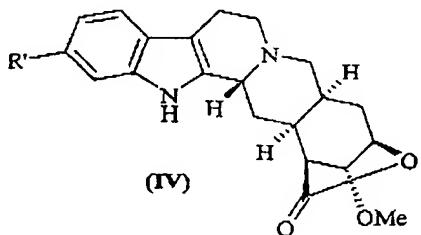
20 7. The process as claimed in claim 6 in which the reduction of compound (IV) is carried out with palladium on charcoal.

8. The compound of formula (III)



9. A compound of formula (IV)

5



in which R' is *p*-toluenesulfonate.